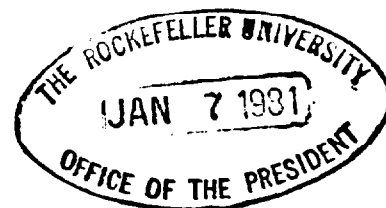


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Box 1424 Oberlin College
Oberlin, Ohio 44074
January 3, 1981

Dr. Joshua Lederberg, President
The Rockefeller University
New York, New York 10021

Dear Dr. Lederberg,

I have recently read an article in the December 19, 1980 issue of The Cancer Letter which described your concern about the lack of creativity found in proposals which are awarded NIH grants. The Article states that you feel this is due to faults in the awarding mechanism. As a student of chemistry, I have some thoughts which I would like to convey. I am addressing these to you because I understand that you are chairman of the President's Cancer Panel.

I believe that the increased specialization of science has also restricted communication to researchers within the same field. As a result, most scientists in a particular field are exposed to the same ideas and prejudices. This leads to a funding system that rewards those who remain in the mainstream. To counteract this problem, I think it might be beneficial to alter the composition of peer review groups by adding scientists from different fields. These researchers would be able to reason logically but would not have been exposed to the prejudices of the field being reviewed. I believe such altered review committees would give more consideration to creative proposals than would conventional panels.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Sincerely yours,

Henry L. Levin

Henry L. Levin

*I am sympathetic
to your diagnosis and
remedy. I am finding
it more difficult to identify
"who decides" on these
procedures.*

*Thank you for writing,
Jan Ruby.*